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HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS IN THE WEST DES MOINES COMMUNITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE YEARS 1962 - 1965

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

I. INTRODUCTION

For several decades the failure of many young people to complete high school, even though they have the ability to do so, has caused concern among educators and parents in the United States. It is of concern because the future of the nation as well as the individual is damaged when a boy or girl is not educated to the fullest extent of his capacity. Today it is recognized that increasingly more education is essential for the individual citizen to take an intelligent and responsible part in the complex affairs of our democratic society. The drop-out has failed to take advantage of available opportunities to develop his optimum potential.¹

The United States has committed itself to public education through the secondary school years for all educable youth. As this goal has never been met, schools must continue searching for ways in which they may encourage a greater percentage of students to complete four years of

¹L. A. VanDyke and K. B. Hoyt, The Drop-Out Problem in Iowa High Schools, Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, 1958, p. 1.

secondary schooling.¹

Those who have investigated early school leaving are agreed that its causes are varied and complex. Many kinds of studies have been made on the assumption that the number of drop-outs could be greatly reduced if it were once learned why boys and girls leave school before high school graduation. Educators in each school system need to study the problem as it affects the students in their area if effective measures are to be developed to reduce the dropout rate to a minimum.

President Kennedy stated the dropout problem profoundly in his 1963 State of the Union message to Congress when he said:

The future of any country which is dependent on the will and wisdom of its citizens is damaged, and irreparably damaged, whenever any of its children is not educated to the fullest extent of his capacity from grade school through graduate school. Today an estimated four out of every ten students in the fifth grade will not finish high school--and that is a waste we cannot afford.²

Many studies and research projects have been conducted in various areas of the country to provide information on the dropout problem. Individual school districts have run their own studies with results reported to the administrators and teachers of their district. It is hoped that the results of

¹Ibid.

²Danial Schreiber, The School Dropout (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1964), Dedication.

the studies would be sufficiently valid to provide a basis for identifying potential dropouts and to initiate curriculum changes as well as other changes which would increase the holding power of the school.

II. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. Since the West Des Moines Community School District came into existence, the failure of youngsters to finish school has been a problem. This problem of dropouts is of concern to the parents, teachers, administrators, and the school board as well as the community of West Des Moines. This problem continues to widen in scope with time rather than diminish.

The West Des Moines Community School District offers adequate curriculum for its students with many academic avenues open and available to students. Yet, each year at graduation, official school records show approximately one out of every thirty students starting senior high is no longer in attendance. Concern in this matter is felt not only for these youngsters, but for the city of West Des Moines, the state of Iowa, and the nation as a whole.

It is the writer's endeavor to find particular factors or causes relating to the student population who drop out in the West Des Moines Community School District. Investigation of personal data will be made to see if there are any

similarities these students have in common which could possibly have caused them to leave school before graduation.

Purpose of the study. The research was conducted to provide information on the dropout problem in the West Des Moines Community School District for the administrators and teachers of this district. It was believed that the results of the study would be sufficiently valid to provide a basis for identifying potential dropouts and to initiate curriculum changes which would increase the holding power of the school.

Valley High School is a rapidly growing suburban high school. It offers a wide and varied curriculum, but one which is geared basically for the college bound student.

Most students come from an above average socioeconomic group. According to the counselors' yearly college attendance report, approximately eighty to eighty-five per cent of the graduating seniors each year begin college the following fall.

Adults in the city of West Des Moines, in which Valley High School is located, have one of the highest educational levels and highest income per capita levels in Iowa as shown in the most recent statistics by the Iowa Census Bureau.

Valley High School's enrollment has increased from 627 students beginning the 1962 school year to 883 at the

start of the 1964 school year. These figures are based on official school records for grades ten, eleven, and twelve.

Importance of the study. In a democracy, the education of an individual is thought of as a duty rather than a privilege because the chief goal of the school is the optimum development of all individuals.¹ Today the nation is faced with a shortage of competent manpower as more than thirty per cent of the students throughout the country who enter high school drop out before completing their secondary education.² This shortage reveals a need to seek workable solutions for the dropout problem.

The attitudes and educational values of the community have a direct influence on the development of local school systems. As community support is such an integral part of the educational system, the dropouts who become the citizens of tomorrow may adversely affect education development. They may find it difficult to support institutions which they felt were of little value to them in their own development. If the educational system is to meet the needs of

¹Russell N. Cassel and Jack Coleman, "A Critical Examination of the School Dropout, Reluctant Learner, and Abler Non-College Student Problem," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XXXVI (November, 1962), 60.

²Edith G. Neisser, School Failures and Dropouts, Public Affairs Pamphlet, Number 346, 2.

the nation, the public schools must be supported by each and every citizen; therefore, schools must be interested in reducing the dropout rate.¹

The realities of the job market for the high school dropout are bleak. Dramatic shifts in industry are taking place and the increasing complexity of the skills needed has forced employers to raise educational requirements. Under the impact of automation and technological change, the number and type of job opportunities available for high school dropouts are rapidly declining. At the present time, the high school dropout can expect to earn less than the graduate, experience unemployment more often, and when employed work in a lower-skill category.²

As factors which might affect school tenure may be evident throughout the students' school lives, identification of potential drop-outs needs to be made as early as possible. Factors unknown to teachers and administrators have played a major role in many drop-out cases. An awareness of some of the symptoms of personal failure and unhappiness exhibited by youngsters who leave school might save many students from the drop-out route.

¹National Education Association, High-School Drop-outs (Discussion Pamphlet. Washington: National Education Association, 1959), 1.

²Herbert Bienstock, Realities of the Job Market for the High School Dropout, Regional Director United States Department of Labor-Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 5, 1963, 1.

III. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were certain limitations to this study due to the inadequacy of the cumulative school records.

Cumulative school record. The study of age at the time of dropping out of school was not recorded in this study due to the fact that it was never recorded in the cumulative folder at the time the student dropped out.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Dropout. For the purpose of this study, a "dropout" was defined as a student in the West Des Moines Community School District between grades ten and twelve who leaves school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of his program of studies and without transferring to another school.

Curriculum. "Curriculum" includes the experiences and activities for which the West Des Moines Community School District accepts responsibility.

Holding power. Holding power is the ability or inability of the school to retain its students until they have completed three years of secondary schooling.

10th grade classification. Any student who has earned a minimum of eight semester credits and fewer than

sixteen semester credits is designated as having 10th grade classification.

11th grade classification. Any student who has earned a minimum of sixteen semester credits and fewer than twenty-four semester credits is designated as having 11th grade classification.

12th grade classification. Any student who has earned a minimum of twenty-four semester credits and fewer than thirty-two semester credits is designated as having 12th grade classification.

V. PROCEDURE

The procedure for carrying out this study was conducted in the following manner.

- A. First it was necessary to obtain permission from the high school principal, Norman Pogemiller, to ascertain the cumulative folders of those students who had dropped out of school.
- B. It was then necessary to select the folders of students who had dropped out of Valley High School from 1962 - 1965.
- C. These folders were then divided according to the year in which they dropped, the grade they were in at the time of dropping, and the sex of the student.

D. Use of these cumulative records for students in grades ten, eleven and twelve provided the necessary personal data for this study. The following points are personal data information which were used in the investigation of these students:

1. Sex of the dropout.
2. Grade level at the time of dropping from school.
3. Intelligence Quotient score.
4. Iowa Test of Educational Development Composite score.
5. Participation in extra-curricular activities.
6. Reason for leaving school.
7. Parents' occupation (fathers and mothers shown separately).
8. Marital status of parents at the time each student dropped.

E. A review of books and periodicals dealing with the dropout problem was also included as part of the investigation.

F. The numbers, percentages and reasons given for these high school students dropping during the period from 1962 - 1965 is shown in table form, along with written information elaborating on the findings in the various areas.

This list of factors under the letter "D" of the

above outline was derived from reviewing sources of information in my "review of the literature," as well as a close review of the completed information available on the school's cumulative records.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Reasons for dropouts. Youth who drop out of school do not readily supply information. Many of them give vague and meaningless reasons for leaving school or give answers which will show themselves in the best light.

Cook's study of ninety-five dropouts from a large city high school found that the reasons for leaving school, as given by the dropouts, were: going to work--39.6 per cent, dislike of school--20.9 per cent, marriage--20.9 per cent, failing courses--9.4 per cent, needed at home--4.6 per cent, left home--2.3 per cent, and administrative request--2.3 per cent. On the other hand, in the opinion of the school counselor the reasons were these: failure and retardation--34.9 per cent, home circumstances--28.1 per cent, marriage--20.2 per cent, feelings of rejection--9.6 per cent, and conflicts with teachers--7.2 per cent.¹

Bowman and Matthews listed these reasons: dislike of school--21 per cent, academic failure--20 per cent, poor social adjustment--18 per cent, need to work because of

¹Edward S. Cook, "An Analysis of Factors Related to Withdrawal from High School Prior to Graduation," Journal of Educational Research, L (November, 1956), 191-96.

poor finances--16 per cent, pregnancy--9 per cent, teachers unfair--6 per cent, and other reasons--10 per cent.¹

Schultz, in his report of Township High School District 207 in Cook County, Illinois, for 1964-65 school year, found that two per cent of the 8,070 high school students during this period were classified "dropouts." It was further reported the reasons most often given by students at the time of leaving were as follows: lack of interest--38.8 per cent, work--16.6 per cent, marriage--11 per cent, armed forces--8.6 per cent, illness--6.7 per cent.²

Investigators are not agreed about the importance of intelligence as a factor in dropping out of school. The United States Department of Labor study of drop-outs in seven communities found that three times as many drop-outs as high school graduates had intelligence quotients under eighty-five, and that nearly three times as many graduates as drop-outs had intelligence quotients of 110 and over:

¹paul H. Bowman and Charles V. Matthews, Motivations of Youth for Leaving School, (United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Cooperative Research Program, Project Number 200, Quincy, Illinois, University of Chicago, Quincy Youth Development Project, September, 1960), 137.

²M. W. Schultz, "High School Dropout Study 1964-65" (Township High School District 207, Cook County, Illinois, 1966), 1. (Lithographed).

	<u>IQ</u> <u>under 85</u>	<u>IQ</u> <u>85 - 89</u>	<u>IQ</u> <u>90 - 109</u>	<u>IQ</u> 110 <u>and over</u>
High school graduates . .	10%	11%	63%	16%
Dropouts . . .	31	15	48	6 ¹

On the basis of these figures, Wolfbein who presented the major results of the United States Department of Labor study, suggested that the waste of human resources through withdrawal of students who might be college material is not as great as some persons contend.²

Bridenstine in his study of 128 dropouts in Newton, Iowa, found the majority of both sexes were in the eighty-five to 100 range on Intelligence Quotient scores, and that only twenty-six per cent had scores above 100. His study went on to report that the mean Intelligence Quotient score of the Newton dropouts was ninety-three.³

There seemed to be a relationship between reading ability and withdrawal from high school. A study by Penty revealed that three times as many poor readers dropped out

¹United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, School and Early Employment of Youth, (A Report on Seven Communities, 1952-1957), Bulletin 1277, Washington, D. C. Government Printing Office, August 1960, 89.

²Seymour L. Wolfbein, "Transition from School to Work: A Study of the School Leaver," Personnel and Guidance Journal, XXXVIII (October, 1959), 98-105.

³Eugene A. Bridenstine, "A Study of the Newton High School Dropouts 1962-63," (Newton, Iowa, 1964), 44. Unpublished.

of school.¹

Failure in school seemed to be closely related to dropping out. Drop-outs were often grade repeaters that failed early and showed a general decline in scholastic attainment from the elementary to the senior high school. The United States Department of Labor found that eighty-four per cent of the drop-outs were retarded at least one year, and fifty-three per cent were retarded two or more years.²

Nearly all studies of the problem have stressed the importance of the socio-economic, cultural status of the family of the drop-out. An extensive study of the impact of social class on adolescents was made in a Midwest town by Hollingshead. One phase of the study concerned the number of drop-outs and the factors which contributed to their leaving school. All the youth of high school age of the upper classes were in school. The largest proportion of drop-outs, eight out of nine, came from the lowest social class. The investigator determined class position by the way the family lived, its income, its possessions, the amount of education of the father and the mother, the family's standing in the community, and its participation in

¹Ruth C. Penty, Reading Ability and High School Drop-Outs, New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1956, 93, Condensed: Education Digest, February 1960.

²United States Department of Labor, loc. cit.

community activities.¹

Identification of the potential drop-out. Cassel and Coleman, writing from the secondary-school point of view listed these recurring characteristics among dropouts:

- (1) Failure of one or more school years (usually 1st, 2nd, 8th, or 9th).
- (2) A year or more behind in reading or arithmetic at seventh-grade level.
- (3) Poor school attendance and numerous truancies.
- (4) Little or no participation in extracurricular school activities.
- (5) Attendance at numerous elementary schools.
- (6) Expresses little interest in school or learning evidences strong resentment toward school control.²

This city used the appearance of any four of the eleven recurring problems as a basis for identification of the potential drop-out. The recurring signs of a drop-out were:

- (1) Seventh-grade achievement a year or more below grade level in arithmetic and reading. The student is not keeping up academically.
- (2) Attendance at several elementary schools. The student cannot develop a sense of belonging to any one.
- (3) A newcomer to Canton (or any city). The student has come from a rural area or a smaller town and feels lost in the big city.
- (4) Failure in one or more years of elementary or high school. Most frequently the failures occur in the first, second, eighth and ninth grades.
- (5) Low economic level. Generally accompanied by a lack of parental emphasis on education.
- (6) A broken home.

¹August B. Hollingshead, "Leaving School," Elmtown's Youth, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949), 329-59.

²Russell N. Cassel, op. cit., 60-65.

- (7) An irregular attendance pattern in high school. Usually this is accompanied by low grades.
- (8) Difficulty in adjusting to the high school. The student does not take part in school affairs.
- (9) Community problems. A youth who has been in difficulty with the police or other community agencies.
- (10) Among girls, going steady with older boys. The boy leaves school for the service or a job and the girl no longer fits in.
- (11) Among boys, ownership of his own car. He must drop out to earn money to support his vehicle.¹

Lichter discussed a number of warning signals which classroom teachers may employ in the detection of potential dropouts.

- (1) A sharp discrepancy between intellectual ability and academic achievement.
- (2) Youngsters who seem weak and unable to cope with situations.
- (3) The child who has a great deal of difficulty getting started or staying interested in a project.
- (4) The youngster who seems somehow strange or different from other children.
- (5) The child who is physically present in the classroom, but emotionally absent.
- (6) The youngster who blames everyone but himself for his troubles.
- (7) The youngster who is continually a behavior problem even though his misdemeanors are minor.
- (8) The combative, belligerent youngster, particularly those who seem to delight in stirring up trouble for its own sake.²

Livingston found that a combination of factors is a better indicator of potential withdrawal from school than any single factor. His study determined that the highest

¹Anita Vogel, "How to Check Drop-outs," School Management, (November, 1961), 79.

²Solomon O. Lichter, The Dropouts (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), 187-189.

correlation was obtained with a combination of factors which comprised low participation in formal and informal school activities, number of grades detained, and status of persons with whom the pupil lived. Livingston's conclusion suggests that the greater the number of factors working to the disadvantage of the pupil, the greater the chance of the pupil's dropping out of school.¹

Holding power. Improvement in school holding power is essentially a local program. It depends upon classroom teachers, administrators, school-board members and citizens in each school district. A number of writers have suggested remedial measures. Wills suggests:

- (1) Giving pupils of limited ability work within their capacity and remedial reading and remedial arithmetic.
- (2) Steering pupils of limited ability to vocational work.
- (3) Putting potential leavers in classes of more sympathetic teachers.
- (4) Conferring with potential leaver's teachers to find ways of helping him get a feeling of success and to get the feeling that teachers are interested in him.
- (5) Letting potential leavers earn their lunches or helping them get a part-time job.
- (6) Giving girls reasons for waiting until they are mature to marry (in homemaking classes).²

¹Hugh A. Livingston, "High-School Graduates and Dropouts--A New Look at a Persistent Problem," School Review, LXVI (Summer 1958), 195-203.

²Claude C. Wills, Jr., "Program to Decrease the Number of Early School Leavers," Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, (September, 1956), 93-97.

That interest by the schools in the drop-out was valuable as reported by the New York Board of Education. A five-year study of a special guidance program for fifteen-year-old students who had characteristics of the potential drop-out showed that the individual attention given to these students was effective in decreasing the number of drop-outs. Comparison groups were also used, these groups being assigned to the regular guidance program of the schools. Members of both the experimental and the comparison groups graduated in much larger numbers than could have been expected.

The meaning of these finds seems to be that intensive work with teachers, revolving about individual students, results not only in the improved education and adjustment of the particular students involved, but also in the other students in the classes of those teachers.¹

The Iowa State Department of Public Instruction sponsored a study of the holding power of Iowa high schools for those students who entered the ninth grade in the fall of 1950, 1951, and 1952. Seventy-three high schools were used. The holding power of this group was 80.4 per cent. As the sampling was biased because a higher percentage of large high schools was used than is true of the state as a whole, the holding power of the sampling was revised to counteract this bias. The holding power for the schools of the state

¹"Intensive Guidance Given Potential High School Drop-outs," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, XXXV (May, 1957), 564.

was then given as 84.2 per cent. Nationally, the holding power of the secondary schools for students who were in the ninth grade during the 1950-1951 school year was 63.4 per cent.¹

The Department of Public Instruction in their study of dropouts in Iowa Public Schools found the following six reasons to be the major factors associated with dropping out of school. These were: (1) School too difficult; (2) Lack of acceptance; (3) Disruptive home situation; (4) Financial need; (5) School program inadequate; (6) Engagement and/or marriage.

Of the 7,242 dropouts during the time of this study 72.9 per cent occurred in grades ten, eleven, and twelve. This study reported 4.1 per cent of all students beginning in these grades dropped out before graduation. The study went on to report that a slightly higher percentage of boys dropped out than girls.

The average Intelligence Quotient score of these dropouts was 96.6, while their composite scores on the Iowa Test of Educational Development was 8.8. Dropouts averaged less than one activity each as reported in the study.

The occupational level of the dropout's father was found to be of significance. Students whose fathers

¹L. A. Van Dyke, op. cit., 1-9.

occupations were classified as unskilled dropped out at a much higher rate than those whose fathers were classified as skilled or in professions.¹

Results of the Des Moines School System's 1965-66 Senior High School Drop-Out Report shows 8.6 per cent of the students beginning the year failed to stay in school. Of those senior high school students, the highest rate of dropouts occurred in the junior year, followed by those who were sophomores. Their study reported the senior class having the lowest percentage of dropouts. The dropout rate for boys was approximately 2.5 per cent higher than that of the girls.²

Polk County found from a study done by the Iowa Department of Public Instruction that they ranked twentieth among the ninety-nine counties in percentage of dropouts. This study showed a 1.3 per cent dropout rate for Polk County grades ten, eleven, and twelve.

The main reasons for dropping out of school were lack of interest, marriage, behavioral difficulty, and employment.³

¹Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, Drop-outs, (A Report on Iowa Public Schools, 1963-64), Des Moines, Iowa, 1965, 4-13.

²Des Moines Public Schools, Department of Guidance and Counseling, Senior High School Drop-Outs, (Des Moines, Iowa, 1966), 2. (Mimeographed)

³Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, op. cit., 21-25.

CHAPTER III

THE FINDINGS

This chapter will include all tables made and a verbal elaboration of the findings in the various areas of this study.

I. THE DROPOUT RATE FOR VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

After a review of all the cumulative folders from 1962-65, the researcher found sixty-four pupils that could be categorized as dropouts. Of these sixty-four, nineteen dropped during the 1962-63 school year, twenty-nine during 1963-64, and sixteen during the 1964-65 school year. The graduating classes for these years numbered 137, 196, and 268 respectively.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SIXTY-FOUR DROPOUTS AS RECORDED IN THE STUDENT'S CUMULATIVE RECORD

Personal information obtained from the student's cumulative record which was instrumental to the researcher in carrying out this study was as follows: (1) sex of the dropout; (2) grade level at the time of dropping; (3) intelligence quotient score of the dropout; (4) composite score on the Iowa Test of Educational Development; (5) participation in extra-curricular activities; (6) reason

given for leaving school; (7) parents' occupation; and (8) marital status of parents at the time each student dropped.

Tables along with verbal information relating to the statistics shown will follow under the headings as listed above.

Grade and sex. Further breakdown shows that in the 1962-63 year, nine sophomores dropped, four of whom were girls and five boys; three juniors, one girl and two boys; seven seniors, four boys and three girls. In the 1963-64 school year, thirteen sophomores dropped, six were girls and seven boys. Juniors during this year consisted of three girls and five boys, and there were two senior girls and six senior boys. The 1963-64 year marked the highest number of dropouts of any of the years in the researcher's study.

In the 1964-65 year, it was found that only one sophomore girl dropped, one junior girl along with six boys. The senior class had three girls and five boys leaving school. Still another breakdown during this period of time can be seen in Table I.

It can be noted from this table that the sophomore and senior classes each had 35.9 per cent of the total number of dropouts. During this period the junior class had 7.8 per cent fewer dropouts with 28.1 per cent of the total.

TABLE I

GRADE AND SEX OF 64 VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS FOR
THE SCHOOL YEARS 1962-63, 1963-64, AND 1964-65

Grade When Dropped	Girls	Boys	Number	Per Cent
10	11	12	23	35.9
11	5	13	18	28.2
12	<u>8</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>35.9</u>
Total	24	40	64	100.0

Boys greatly exceeded the number of girls dropping from school during this period of time. The boys total exceeding that of the girls by a twenty-five per cent margin in the total percentage. An examination does, however, show that in the sophomore class, the boys did only exceed the number of girls dropping by one.

Looking at the column under "boys" in Table I, it may be noted a gradual increase from year to year in the number of boys dropping. Whereas in the "girls" column, the sophomore year is the highest, then a drop of 45.4 per cent takes place the next year, only to rise again slightly the senior year.

Intelligence Quotient. Intelligence quotients were available for all students in this study. Ranges of these scores are shown in Table II. The mean Intelligence Quotient

TABLE II

INTELLIGENT QUOTIENT RANGES AND MEAN SCORES FOR 64 VALLEY
HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS, 1962-63, 1963-64, AND 1964-65

Grade When Dropped	40 Boys			24 Girls			Total	
	10	11	12	10	11	12	No.	Per Cent
Intelligence Quotient Ranges								
Below 70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
71 to 80	1	1	2	-	1	1	6	9.4
81 to 90	4	4	2	1	-	1	12	18.8
91 to 100	3	2	3	1	3	1	13	20.3
101 to 110	2	3	4	4	1	3	16	25.0
111 to 120	1	2	3	4	1	2	12	18.8
over 120	-	-	1	2	-	-	3	4.7

Mean I.Q.'s for Sophomores - 101.2

Mean I.Q.'s for Juniors - 95.7

Mean I.Q.'s for Seniors - 107.6

Mean I.Q.'s for Boys - 97.2

Mean I.Q.'s for Girls - 105.2

Total Mean I.Q. Scores - 101.5

for the juniors was lower than that of any other class.

Their mean Quotient of 95.7 was 6.6 percentage points below that of the sophomore dropouts who had a mean Intelligence Quotient of 101.2. Senior dropouts had the highest mean

Intelligence Quotient of 107.6 which was 11.9 points higher than the sophomore dropouts. The major portion of the dropouts fell in the range of 81 to 120 with the range of 101 to 120 having the single largest number of students. There were only three Quotients over 120 among the dropouts. The boys had a mean of 97.2 while that of the girls was 105.2. An overall mean Intelligence Quotient for the sixty-four Valley High School dropouts was 101.5.

Reasons for dropping out. Reasons for dropping school fell into seven categories as identified on Table III. "Lack of interest" and "enlistment in military service" were the two major reasons given by the boys. These two reasons encompassed seventy-five per cent of all boys dropping. The girls, on the other hand, were quite evenly divided between these seven reasons. "Lack of interest" was, however, the reason given by the highest percentage of girls with 29.2 per cent. Of the twenty-four girls dropping, only four gave pregnancy as the reason. Looking at the major reason given for dropping by the combined group of boys and girls, "lack of interest" ranks highest with 34.4 per cent, while "illness" and "marriage" was the reason given by only 7.8 per cent. This being the smallest percentage of the combined two groups. Six students had "suspension" as their reason for leaving, while only seven stated "work" as the reason for dropping.

TABLE III

REASONS FOR DROPPING AS RECORDED IN THE CUMULATIVE RECORD
FOLDER OF 64 VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS,
1962-63, 1963-64, AND 1964-65

Grade When Dropped	40 Boys			24 Girls			Total	
	10	11	12	10	11	12	No.	Per Cent
Illness	-	-	1	2	1	1	5	7.8
Lack of Interest	6	7	2	5	1	1	22	34.4
Suspended	2	1	-	1	1	1	6	9.4
Pregnant	-	-	-	1	1	2	4	6.3
Marriage	-	-	2	-	1	2	5	7.8
Service	4	4	7	-	-	-	15	23.4
Work	-	1	3	2	-	1	7	10.9

Occupation of fathers. The occupation of the fathers was broken down into six classifications as shown in Table IV of this study. Dropouts whose fathers were classified as "skilled labor" had the highest percentage of dropouts with 28.1 per cent. Second were the "semi-skilled" at 18.8 per cent while those whose fathers were in the unskilled classification were fourth in the ranking at 14.6. No record of the father's occupation was given in the case of eleven dropouts, a group ranked third in frequency with a percentage total of 17.2. The smallest percentage of dropouts were those whose fathers' occupation was classified as "professional and technical." The percentage fell to 9.4.

TABLE IV

OCCUPATION OF FATHERS OF 64 VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
DROPOUTS, 1962-63, 1963-64 AND 1964-65

Grade When Dropped	40 Boys			24 Girls			Total	
	10	11	12	10	11	12	No.	Per Cent
Employment Classification								
Unskilled	-	2	2	1	3	1	9	14.6
Semi-skilled	2	2	3	2	1	2	12	18.8
Skilled	5	3	4	4	-	2	18	28.1
Sales	2	2	3	-	-	1	8	12.5
Professional and Technical	1	-	2	-	1	2	6	9.4
No record	2	4	1	4	-	-	11	17.2

Occupation of mothers. This study revealed as shown in Table V that only 26.5 per cent of the dropouts had mothers who were working. Of those working, the highest percentage was in the "semi-skilled" classification, followed by the "unskilled." Those who were classified as skilled held the second lowest percentage. This fact was directly opposite the findings regarding fathers' occupation, since the highest percentage of dropouts had fathers in the "skilled" classification. No record was given for the occupation of six mothers. "Housewife" dominated the occupation of mothers in this study with a percentage total

of 68.8. The cumulative folders showed 67.5 per cent of the boys' mothers were housewives while the girls had 70.8 per cent listed. Only 27.5 per cent of the boys' mothers were engaged in an occupation outside the home. The girls had a total of twenty-five per cent of the mothers employed outside of the home.

TABLE V

OCCUPATION OF MOTHERS OF 64 VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
DROPOUTS, 1962-63, 1963-64, AND 1964-65

Grade When Dropped	40 Boys			24 Girls			Total	
	10	11	12	10	11	12	No.	Per Cent
Employment Classification								
Unskilled	-	3	-	1	-	1	5	7.8
Semi-skilled	3	1	1	1	-	1	7	10.9
Skilled	-	1	1	1	-	-	3	4.7
Housewife	7	7	13	6	5	6	44	68.8
Professional and Technical	-	1	-	1	-	-	2	3.1
No Record	2	-	-	1	-	-	3	4.7

Iowa Test of Educational Development. The largest number of dropouts at Valley High School had a standardized score in the range of twenty and below in their Iowa Test of Educational Development. The composite score showed a

Participation in activities. Thirty-two different school activities were available for student participation at Valley High School. Girls who dropped showed a greater interest in participation in school activities before dropping than did the boys. Thirteen boys out of the forty dropouts participated in one or more school activities for 32.5 per cent. Fifteen girls, of the twenty-four dropouts, participated in one or more activities for a percentage total of 62.5. The researcher found 56.3 per cent of the sixty-four Valley High School dropouts did not participate in any school activity. Boys outnumbered the girls more than two to one in nonparticipation in school activities. The highest percentage of participation was in one activity, with 29.7 about evenly divided between girls and boys. Two activities were engaged in by 10.9 per cent. Only 3.1 per cent of the dropouts participated in three activities. As a group more sophomore girls participated in activities than any other. Those participating the least were the sophomore boys and junior girls, each having only three participating in any school activity at all.

Marital status of parents. Data taken from the cumulative records of the dropped students showed whether the parents were living, and whether married or divorced. It was also noted in the case of divorced parents, which parent the youngster was living with. In the case of the

TABLE VII

NUMBER OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATED IN BY 64 VALLEY
HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS, 1962-63, 1963-64, AND 1964-65

Grade When Dropped	40 Boys			24 Girls			Total	
	10	11	12	10	11	12	No.	Per Cent
Number of Activities								
0	9	8	10	3	2	4	36	56.3
1	3	3	3	6	2	2	19	29.7
2	-	2	1	2	1	1	7	10.9
3	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	3.1

List of Activities in Which Students Can Participate:

Football	V Club
Fall Track	Band
Basketball	Latin Club
Spring Track	Future Teachers
Golf	Wrestling
Drill Team	Future Homemakers
Spanish Club	Baseball
Kiwanis Key Club	Intramurals
Student Council	Small Vocal Groups
Library Assistants	Dramatics
Chorus	Annual Staff
Health Careers Club	American Field Service
Art Club	Band Aids
Thesbians	Science Club
Pep Club	Glee Club
Cheerleaders	Newspaper Staff

student's not living with either parent for any reason,
records showed with whom the student was then living.
Findings relating to the marital status of parents are
shown in Table VIII. Ten dropouts, which constituted 15.6

per cent of the total, came from divorced homes. It can also be noted that seventy-five per cent of the Valley High School dropouts were living at home with both parents at the time of dropping. Those dropouts whose parents were divorced all were found to be living with their mothers. Four girls were listed as married and no longer living at home. Only one girl was living with a guardian due to the death of both parents. None of the boys dropping was listed as married.

TABLE VIII

MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS OF 64 VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
DROPOUTS, 1962-63, 1963-64, AND 1964-65

Grade When Dropped	40 Boys			24 Girls			Total	
	10	11	12	10	11	12	No.	Per Cent
Living with father only	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Living with mother only	2	4	1	3	-	-	10	15.6
Parents divorced	2	4	1	3	-	-	10	15.6
Living with both parents	9	8	15	7	3	7	48	75.0
Living with guardian	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1.6
Married and not living at home	-	-	-	-	2	2	4	6.2

NOTE: The total number exceeds 64, and the total per cent exceeds 100 because the table indicates divorced parents and also with whom they are living.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of the researcher in this study were as follows:

1. To determine the extent of the dropout problem at Valley High School.
2. To determine if any trends or patterns of relating evidence becomes apparent from the data gathered.

The specific objectives of the researcher in this study were as follows:

1. To isolate the specific percentage of dropouts in the West Des Moines school system.
2. To isolate the reasons given for dropping out of school.
3. To determine specific characteristics common to all or a majority of those who did drop out of school before graduation.
4. To make the findings of this study available to the teaching and administrative staff in hopes that some suggested proposals for increasing the school's holding power might be forthcoming.

A review of the literature on dropouts, both in books and periodicals was conducted along with a careful examination

of the cumulative records of all Valley High School drop-outs from 1962 through 1965.

I. SUMMARY

The researcher found reasons given by students for dropping were many and varied. The apparent lack of interest on the part of both boys and girls was very evident by the number who were listed as dropping for this reason. For the boys, entering the service was also a major reason given for dropping. The girls, however, were quite evenly divided in their reasons for leaving aside from lack of interest.

The number of boys dropping outnumber the girls by a considerable margin with the girls having a slightly higher Intelligence Quotient score. Sophomores and seniors dropped in greater numbers than did the juniors even though the mean Quotient and the mean composite scores for the sophomores and seniors were higher than that of the juniors.

Most of the mothers of both the boys and girls dropping were listed as housewives. Of those who were working most were in the classification of unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled. The percentage in professional and technical employment was very low.

In the case of the fathers' occupation, the majority of fathers were also in the unskilled, semi-skilled and

skilled classification.

Non-participation in school activities was noted in slightly over half of the dropouts. Very few participated in as many as four activities. The girls did, however, participate to a greater extent in school activities than did the boys.

Three-fourths of the student dropouts were living at home with both parents at the time they dropped out of school. Of the remaining one-fourth of the dropouts, a majority of them were living with their mothers who were divorced. Only one girl was living with a guardian due to the death of both her parents. Four girls were reported as married and therefore no longer living at home.

In comparing the study at Valley High School with the review of the literature, the researcher found the Valley High School dropouts to have a higher Intelligence Quotient than those in Bridenstine's study.¹ The Intelligence Quotients of the Valley High School dropouts correlated with the results gathered in a study done by the United States Department of Labor in 1960 in which they found the majority of dropouts falling into the range of ninety to 110.²

¹Bridenstine, loc. cit.

²United States Department of Labor, loc. cit.

A marked similarity was found between the researcher's study and that of Cook in the reasons given for leaving school by dropouts. Dislike of school, going to work, and the service were the main reasons given by those dropping in both studies.¹ These reasons for leaving were very similar to those in Schultz's study of dropouts in Cook County, Illinois.²

It was found in all studies reviewed as well as the researcher's study that the percentage of boys dropping out of school is higher than that of girls. The percentage of dropouts at Valley High School was found to be less than any study in the review of the literature.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information gathered in this study, it is the conclusion of the researcher that dropouts at Valley High School are a problem. Over the three years covered by this study, the researcher found that of the 2,244 students beginning school from 1962 through 1965, 2.8 per cent became dropouts.

The researcher would also like to point out that his study only included students in grades ten, eleven, and

¹Cook, loc. cit.

²Schultz, loc. cit.

twelve. Should a study have been done which reverted back to the number beginning school in the upper elementary grades and following each of these classes through graduation the percentage might have been considerably higher.

It should be noted that as long as dropouts occur at Valley High School, a bona fide effort needs to be made by all staff members to increase the holding power of the school if the goal of educating all students to their maximum potential is to be realized.

In this day and age when education is the key, it behooves those in all responsible positions of education as well as the general public in every community to keep students in their schools from becoming a dropout statistic.

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